

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CANBER 01833 250744Z

16

ACTION EA-10

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R 250706Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5341

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 1833

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: AS, US, PINT, EWWT, MARR

SUBJ: CHAIRMAN OF ANTI-FOREIGN MILITARY BASES GROUP USES

AMBASSADOR GREEN'S ASIA SOCIETY SPEECH TO RENEW ATTACK ON

OMEGA FACILITY

REF: CANBERRA 1591

1. MHR KEN FRY, THE ALP REPRESENTATIVE FROM FRASER, IN THE ACT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE ANTI-FOREIGN MILITARY BASES GROUP, PUBLISHED A LETTER IN THE MARCH 24, 1975 EDITION OF THE CANBERRA TIMES WHICH USES REPORTS OF AMBASSADOR GREEN'S MARCH 13 REMARKS TO JOURNALISTS AND SPEECH TO THE ASIA SOCIETY AS A PEG UPON WHICH TO ATTACH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OMEGA STATION IN AUSTRALIA. THE TEXT OF THE LETTER APPEARS BELOW:

2. QTE. THE REPORT IN THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW OF MARCH 13 OF A SPEECH BY THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA, MARSHALL GREEN, ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OMEGA BASE IN AUSTRALIA RAISES SEVERAL IMPORTANT POINTS (THE CANBERRA TIMES, MARCH 14).

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CANBER 01833 250744Z

3. QTE. FIRSTLY, THE AMBASSADOR HAS STATED THAT THE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REVIEWING THIS ISSUE HAS REPORTED FAVOURABLY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OMEGA SYSTEM IN AUSTRALIA. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE U.S. AMBASSADOR, UNLIKE THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC, HAS HAD ACCESS TO THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE WHEN IN FACT, THE COMMITTEE HAS NOT YET TABLED ITS REPORT IN PARLIAMENT.

4. QTE SECONDLY, THE AMBASSADOR HAS ATTEMPTED TO GLOSS OVER THE MILITARY USES OF THE OMEGA SYSTEM. WHILE BOTH THE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ADVANTAGES OF THE OMEGA SYSTEM ARE DEBATABLE AND IN DOUBT AT A TIME WHEN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS PROPOSING A NUCLEAR-FREE INDIAN OCEAN, ANY ACT WHICH COULD POSSIBLY FAVOUR THE INTRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS INTO THIS AREA WOULD BE AN ERROR.

5. QTE. THIRDLY, THE AMBASSADOR HAS ADMITTED THAT THERE IS STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BASE AMONG THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE. THIS IS THE ONE POSITIVE POINT IN THE AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH, SINCE IT HAS LED HIM, AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE US STATE DEPARTMENT, TO CLEARLY STATE THAT THE US WOULD NOT PRESS THE ISSUE IF IT MET WITH CONTINUED RESISTANCE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT.

6. QTE, HE HAS THUS DESTROYED THE LAST-DITCH ARGUMENT OF PROPENETS OF OMEGA WHO WOULD ARGUE THAT AUSTRALIANS HAD TO ACCEPT THE BASE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE U.S. ALLIANCE. THE FALLACY OF THIS ARGUMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN DEMONSTRATED DURING THE WAR IN VIETNAM AND, IF FURTHER PROOF WERE NEEDED, IT HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY MARSHALL GREEN WHO SAID, QTE. SO WHETHER OR NOT WE MAKE PROGRESS, WHETHER OR NOT THE OMEGA SYSTEM IS SET UP, IT WON'T AFFECT OUR RELATIONSHIP. END QTE.

7. QTE. THESE ARE VERY SIGNIFICANT REMARKS. THEY COULD BE INTERPRETED AS MEANING THAT THE AMBASSADOR CONSIDERS THE OMEGA ISSUE TO BE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO THE ISSUE OF MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE U.S.

8. QTE. TO CARRY THESE IMPLICATIONS FURTHER, IT COULD BE CLAIMED THAT AS THE AMBASSADOR IS IN THE BUSINESS OF MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS HE WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE OMEGA INSTALLED IN AUSTRALIA
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CANBER 01833 250744Z

IF IT POSED A NEW THREAT TO THOSE GOOD RELATIONS WHICH HE HAS SO SUCCESSFULLY FOSTERED.

9. QTE. NO ONE SHOULD NOW ARGUE THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD ACCEPT THAT THE OMEGA NAVIGATION BASE BE ESTABLISHED IN AUSTRALIA, IF IT POSES ANY POSSIBLE THREAT TO OUR SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE. WE CALL UPON THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE, AND THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, TO REAFFIRM THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS

BASE, IN THE LIGHT OF THE AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH. END QTE.

10. COMMENT: FRY IS ONE OF FOUR ALP MEMBERS OF THE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE DEFENSE WHO OPPOSE OMEGA. HE HAS ADMITTED THAT HE OPPOSES OMEGA PRIMARILY BECAUSE HE WANTS TO USE OPPOSITION TO OMEGA AS A VEHICLE TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THE JOINT DEFENSE INSTALLATIONS IN AUSTRALIA. HIS PERSISTENCE IN OPPOSING OMEGA IS NOT MATCHED BY AN IMPRESSIVE INTELLECT. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT STATEMENTS SIGNED BY FRY IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ANTI-FOREIGN MILITARY BASES GROUP ARE PREPARED BY ACADEMICS AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. FOR AFFAIRS SECRETARY RENOUF TODAY PRIVATELY EXPRESSED DISGUST FOR FRY AS "TROUBLESOME LIGHTWEIGHT". EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE FRY LETTER WILL HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE ON OUTCOME OF THIS ISSUE.
HARROP

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